

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

There is no other purpose for the broadcast flag than to limit or altogether prohibit consumer's ability to record (space shift or time shift) digital content. The flag itself does not do this. This flag allows the industry to pursue legal avenues to force technology vendors to develop and market only industry approved devices that allow the entertainment industry ultimate control over the content consumer's have legally obtained.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices?

Yes. This is the ultimate goal of the proposed broadcast flag. It is a mechanism to identify, restrict and prevent access to digital content after the consumer has purchased the content or purchased access to the content.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

Yes. The entertainment industry is actively pursuing new rules, legislation and restrictive licenses that will prevent devices that do not recognize the flag from being compatible with newer devices and the DTV broadcast technology itself.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

The flag would become the barrier to entry into the market for all new DTV technology. The entertainment industry would control which new technologies could enter the market and which technologies would be forced out of the market simply by controlling their use of the flag.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

Currently a DVD player can be purchased for under \$100. A DVD player and VCR combination unit can be purchased for approximately \$150. If the broadcast flag becomes a reality, low-cost consumer products like these will disappear completely. The new technology required to implement the broadcast flag will easily double or triple the cost of consumer equipment for many years to come. Smaller manufacturers may well be forced out of business due to the increased cost of producing compliant devices.

Other Comments:

I support the right of content creators to be paid for their work. I also support the public's right to have works enter the public domain, to make fair use of protected works and of the right (doctrine) of first sale. The entertainment industry is openly trying to abolish these consumer rights. Digital Rights Management is the primary method that entertainment corporations are trying to protect their business methods at the expense of consumers and content creators. If they succeed there will be far less content created and possibly never will any new content enter the public domain.